

**Draft California State Plan for CTE:
A Vision for Equity and Excellence in CTE**

DRAFT

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Introduction

California is undergoing a significant change to the structure of its economy and the ways that people live, learn, and work across the state's diverse geography. Global trends, including digitization, the automation of jobs and tasks, and the rapid growth of hybrid, remote, and asynchronous work and learning, place new and evolving demands on state systems and structures. The COVID-19 pandemic has both highlighted and accelerated these long-term trends. California's educational systems and structures must respond – with equity – to fundamental changes in the ways people work and learn in California and the ways in which they will do so in the future.

These patterns also raise urgent questions about preparing California's future workforce and ensuring workers are able to advance now and in the future. Young people and adults need help navigating these unprecedented changes, accessing postsecondary education, and preparing for fulfilling and productive careers. Career technical education (CTE) has long supported learners of all ages in exploring possible careers and developing the skills needed to achieve their aspirations and meet the demands of the labor market. Now more than ever, it is critical that all students have equitable access to high-quality CTE.

Californians face unprecedented challenges in finding and obtaining quality jobs.¹ A 2021 California Future of Work Commission report found that 31 percent of California's workers made less than \$15 per hour.² It also found that 45 percent of Californians in poverty have at least one family member working full time, with the burdens of inequitable access to family-sustaining wage jobs falling disproportionately on Hispanic, African American, Pacific Islander, Native American, and women-headed households as well as people with less formal education and the formerly incarcerated.³ The California Future of Work Commission has recommended future-proofing California with jobs and skills to prepare for technology, climate, and other unpredictable events, signaling a need to be forward-looking as the state's education and training systems develop pathways to careers that do not yet exist and prepare the workers of tomorrow. California must ensure all workers and learners have access to CTE that can help them build the skills needed to enter quality jobs of the future that provide living, family-sustaining wages, and opportunities for advancement.

All students stand to benefit from career and technical education (CTE). Evidence suggests that CTE, especially in combination with dual enrolment programs at the high school level, is associated with improved student outcomes such as high school graduation rate and earnings,

¹ California Future of Work Commission, *A New Social Compact for Work and Workers*, Institute for the Future of California, March 2021.

² California Future of Work Commission, *A New Social Compact for Work and Workers*, Institute for the Future of California, March 2021. Note: This data represents workers across the entire state of California, the majority of whom are full-time workers.

³ California Future of Work Commission, *A New Social Compact for Work and Workers*, Institute for the Future of California, March 2021.

particularly among students experiencing poverty.⁴ At the postsecondary level, CTE has been associated with increased educational attainment and earnings.⁵

However, CTE continues to operate as an educational alternative, rather than as a mainstream and core educational component. Most careers – now and in the future – require postsecondary education and training. A mindset that artificially bifurcates student options limits the development of California’s workforce and closes doors for young people and adults. California must ensure that its educational system prepares all students for a wide spectrum of careers and builds high-quality college and career pathways programs to meet this need, as described in the California Workforce Pathways Joint Advisory Committee’s (CWPJAC) *Guiding Policy Principles to Support Student-Centered K-14+ Pathways* (see Appendix A).

This plan sets forth a bold vision, key priorities and themes, short-term goals and strategies, and a call to action for achieving California’s aims and outcomes for student success and meeting employers’ future workforce needs. The plan seeks to improve equity in access and outcomes across the state’s diverse geography, student and worker populations, and individual identities. It provides cohesion and direction to current state, regional, and local level efforts through visionary and innovative approaches that are relevant for all interest holders, most importantly for students, workers, and employers as the CTE system’s ultimate benefactors. In its approach, the plan preserves the intentionality of California’s student-centered approach and the California Way.⁶

This plan sets a course to align and strengthen current efforts, and build on previous ones, to improve and leverage CTE, including building the capacity of the field to make strategic use of current and future levels and sources of funding.⁷ Many of these efforts are currently perceived by the field as disjointed. These efforts include the [California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office Vision for Success, guided pathways reforms in community colleges](#); [the Future of Work Commission](#); the [Strong Workforce](#) and [K12 Strong Workforce](#) programs; the [CTE Incentive Grant Program \(CTEIG\)](#); and state plans for federal funding through the [Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act \(Perkins\)](#), the [Workforce Innovation and](#)

⁴ MDRC. “What Works in Career and Technical Education: Evidence Underlying Programs and Policies That Work.” December 2019. <https://www.mdrc.org/publication/what-works-career-and-technical-education>.

⁵ University of Wisconsin-Madison. “What do we know about Career and Technical Education?” Institute for Research on Poverty. April 2019. <https://www.irp.wisc.edu/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/FF38-2019.pdf>.

⁶ The California Department of Education has defined The California Way as: “raising academic standards through the alignment of instruction and assessments that ensure those standards are met; providing more equitable funding and local control, allowing communities to determine how to best meet the educational needs of the students they serve; giving the public valuable information to help evaluate schools, with descriptions that are easy to understand and help identify successes or areas of need; doing all this in a collaborative, positive way in which the CDE is a critical friend that supports the decisions made locally.” California Department of Education. “Global California 2030. An Initiative of State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson.” 2018. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/documents/globalca2030report.pdf>.

⁷ For example, significant investments in the Golden State Pathways Program and dual enrollment are included in the recent education omnibus budget trailer bill, AB181.

[Opportunity Act](#), and the [Every Student Succeeds Act](#). The plan also aligns with the [multi-year roadmap](#) between the Governor's Administration and the California Community College system, which includes goals and expectations for improving student educational outcomes and success, advancing equity, increasing intersegmental collaboration to benefit students, and supporting workforce preparedness and high-demand career pipelines.

This plan was developed under the purview of the CWPJAC. It builds on the Committee's efforts over the last several years to address systems alignment policies specific to career pathways within the context of recent and future state and federal investments, as well as on successes including strengthening CTE programming and alignment between secondary education, postsecondary education, and the workforce through CTEIG, the [K12 Strong Workforce](#) program, and Perkins. Foundational to this plan are the Committee's *Guiding Policy Principles to Support Student-Centered K–14+ Pathways* (see Appendix A), which were designed with a view toward engaging and preparing students of all ages for fulfilling careers, supporting lifelong learning, and addressing the workforce needs of the evolving economy.

Finally, this plan builds on previous planning work (see Appendix B) and is the result of an extensive research and consultation process that included: background research on key existing work and promising policies and practices within California and across the nation; ongoing collaboration between the California Department of Education (CDE), the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO), and the State Board of Education; feedback from the CWPJAC; and engagement with interest holders across the state through focus groups and surveys.

This plan is one piece of a larger vision for improving the CTE landscape in California. Shortly after this plan is published, the CWPJAC will launch a series of town halls across the state to share this plan with interest holders. These town halls will inform the development of state- and regional-level implementation plans that outline clear next steps for operationalizing the *Vision for Equity and Excellence in CTE*. These implementation plans will be accompanied by key resources developed to support effective adoption of CTE best practices and will be shared widely with practitioners throughout the state.

A Bold Vision

Equity is at the heart of the vision for excellence in CTE in California. This includes equity across populations and identities, places and geographies, and systems and structures. A cutting-edge, statewide CTE system that meets the needs of employers must be student-centered: all students benefit from CTE, and all pathways should be college and career pathways. The CTE system of the future will provide all students and workers with multiple entry and exit points and opportunities and supports for access and success that reflect and respond to their lived experiences and their working, learning, and daily lives.

CTE in California must develop a diverse, relevant, and qualified workforce to maintain the state's economic vitality and meet labor market demand. To achieve these aims, California will create an overall statewide CTE system that is coherent, flexible, and adaptable, and grounded in the *Guiding Policy Principles to Support Student-Centered K–14+ Pathways*. California's CTE

system will be aligned and relevant to the current and future labor markets in the state and its regions, providing pathways for all into living, family-sustaining wages. This CTE system of the future will meet the needs of every geography and all its individual users – at all ages, in both virtual and real worlds.

Looking forward, CTE in California must be at the forefront of removing barriers – real or perceived – among systems and institutions in order to achieve the vision of a statewide CTE system. This means eliminating bifurcations between college and career, shifting entrenched mindsets about pathways into the world of work, and updating policies and practices that reinforce “either/or thinking” and limit career options. It also means boosting collaboration between secondary and postsecondary education, education and industry, and between and within institutions in each of the state’s regions. The design of this system must keep sustainability and durability in mind to ensure CTE remains nimble in the face of new economies and new challenges and is funded based on evidence and research.

Framework: Key Priorities and Themes

The framework for this plan includes key priorities and themes anchored in equity and access (see Appendix C). To achieve the vision for CTE outlined in this plan, California will focus its efforts around four key priorities, aligned with the *Guiding Policy Principles to Support Student-Centered K-14+ Pathways*, over the next 10 years. As a living document, this plan will be periodically revised and updated to reflect the evolving context, priorities, and needs in California. The four key priorities are:

- **Supply that meets demand:** As the most populous state – with the highest Gross Domestic Product and one of the most diverse economies in the United States, the world’s largest economy – California has a unique opportunity to serve as a pathbreaker in 21st-century CTE. Success will provide all Californians with the opportunity to pursue meaningful careers, earning wages that can support families and help communities thrive. To do this, California must build an inclusive CTE system that aligns the supply of talent with the skills that are in demand.
- **Effective delivery and support:** Ensuring key components of CTE pathways, including work-based learning and dual enrollment, are delivered effectively and equitably is critical for improving student outcomes. Delivering effective and equitable CTE programs also means providing learners and workers a wide range of opportunities to demonstrate and validate what they have learned in and outside the education system. Targeted and individualized supports for learners, workers, and employers would also boost access to key components of CTE pathways, promote equitable student success outcomes, and increase diversity in workplaces.
- **Data that informs investments:** Data is essential to create opportunities based on labor market dynamics, inform programming, understand what learners and workers need to be successful, make delivery and support more effective and efficient, and support progress on equity and access. Data is also important for conducting research on how to improve systems that support college and career pathways. Data collection

that is burdensome for practitioners can limit users from achieving the aim of gathering data: supporting continuous improvement and informing investments through data analysis. A strategy for better use of data includes supporting partners, especially those that are under-resourced, to collect and make sense of data, build the capacity of interest holders to use data effectively to target resources, and develop more streamlined and efficient data collection processes.

- **Systems alignment:** Aligning systems to close skill, employment, and equity gaps requires collaboration between key sectors such as K–12 education, postsecondary education, employers, workforce development organizations, community-based organizations, and intermediaries. Systems alignment at both the regional and state levels is critical for bringing greater coherence and efficiency to CTE and achieving regional and state priorities and goals. All strategies for developing systems of high-quality pathways require cross-sector collaboration and alignment to sustainably grow and scale. Incentives such as funding that promote systems alignment can help to create synergies and efficiencies that ultimately benefit learners and workers and boost student success.

Cutting across these priorities are five major themes that support the priorities. These are:

- **Pathways:** CTE provides one of many pathways into the labor market. Education equips students with the skills and competencies they need to achieve strong employment outcomes. Pathways bridge secondary and postsecondary education, include multiple on- and off-ramps, and lead to and through postsecondary credentials aligned with industry demand and quality jobs.
- **Dual Enrollment:** Obtaining college credit prior to high school graduation has a wide range of positive academic effects for students, including boosting academic achievement in high school; high school completion; postsecondary access, enrollment, and degree attainment; and credit accumulation.⁸ Increasing strategic dual enrollment will help accelerate educational attainment that leads to meaningful employment.
- **Regional Partnership Development:** Connecting students to work experience and job opportunities, as well as developing and deploying comprehensive supports that meet students' needs, requires regional infrastructure for coordination, collaboration, and alignment. Regional partnerships can help link up systems, remove siloes, and create efficiencies across education and workforce efforts to meet employer demand.
- **CTE Teacher and Faculty Preparation and Pipeline:** Teachers and faculty members are key to helping build the future of CTE. The pipeline and preparation of CTE teachers

⁸ College and Career Access Pathways Legislative Report, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2021, <https://www.cccco.edu/-/media/CCCCO-Website/Reports/cccco-ccap-051121-a11y.pdf>; Dual Enrollment Programs. What Works Clearinghouse, Institute of Education Sciences, 2017. Retrieved on August 12, 2021 from: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/InterventionReports/wwc_dual_enrollment_022817.pdf

and faculty, as well as support and resources, should reflect the needs of CTE and demands of the labor market now and in the future.

- **Work-Based Learning:** Early and meaningful experiences in the world of work can be a powerful lever for improving student engagement and success. Increasing work-based learning will be important for accelerating and advancing students into meaningful employment. Work-based learning is also a powerful equity strategy that supports learners in gaining access to workplaces and professional networks.

Goals and Strategies for Years 1-3

Over the next three years, California will aim to achieve four main goals, which are the core of this plan and have foundational threads of equity and access woven throughout. Upon review of progress in two years, these goals will be revised, updated, and expanded, as needed, and additional goals will be added to make further progress toward the vision. As a living document, this plan will be periodically revised and updated to reflect the evolving context, priorities, and needs in California.

Goal 1: Expand work-based learning in all regions

1.1 Fostering employer engagement and co-ownership

- Develop a framework and process for employer engagement and co-ownership that helps employers collaborate with education and align talent pipeline management strategies to college and career pathways
- Develop and implement strategies for securing work-based learning opportunities that are adapted to the unique needs and contexts of California's regions, including urban, suburban, and rural areas

1.2 Providing supports and resources

- Tailor supports for both participants and employers to maintain quality and ensure impact of work-based learning opportunities and ensure work-based learning opportunities deliver clear benefits to both participants and employers
- Identify and remove barriers to accessing work-based learning opportunities

1.3 Building infrastructure

- Establish common definitions of terms such as work-based learning
- Define the continuum of work-based learning activities in which all learners will equitably participate, and develop and scale work-based learning opportunities that align to the newly defined continuum, college and career pathways programs, and students' career goals
- Develop, scale, and build awareness in all CTE programs about youth/pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, internships, and other high-intensity work-based learning models that allow students to earn while they learn

- Support and sustain regional partnerships for WBL

Goal 2: Grow dual enrollment in all regions

2.1 Fostering collaboration between secondary and postsecondary systems

- Grow state and regional infrastructure and processes to boost collaboration between secondary and postsecondary institutions on dual enrollment program design, implementation, resourcing, and student support
- Build out data systems that help secondary and postsecondary institutions and systems share information and support high school students in earning and validating college credit

2.2 Providing supports and resources

- Identify and remove barriers to accessing dual enrollment opportunities
- Ensure all students have the information and individualized support needed to fully participate and succeed in dual enrollment opportunities

2.3 Aligning dual enrollment opportunities with college and career pathways

- Cultivate strategic dual enrollment opportunities that align with college and career pathways and award credentials with value in the labor market
- Improve alignment between dual enrollment opportunities and guided pathways reforms, including by tying these opportunities to a guided pathway or program of study

Goal 3: Boost data-informed decision-making for equity and impact

3.1 Using data to support equity

- Build understanding of equity among all college and career pathways interest holders in California
- Set equity goals at all levels (e.g., state, regional, institutional) for CTE and monitor progress
- Develop processes and a plan to use data to identify equity gaps and impact, act on findings, and continuously improve

3.2 Using data for college and career pathway design and impact

- Use data such as labor market information, input from business and industry, and evidence of program impact to inform creation, adoption, and growth of all CTE programs and credentials
- Analyze data on short-term imperatives such as immediate learner, worker, and employer needs and long-term impacts such as potential for advancement and career ladders and lattices to inform decision-making on CTE program development

Aligning data systems for impact and equity

- Develop common definitions, data elements, collection procedures, and reporting structures for cross-sector and cross-agency programs and activities, such as dual enrollment and work-based learning, to improve equity and student success, support continuous improvement, and provide user-friendly access to data
- Expand and accelerate the work of aligning data systems, including the development of data agreements, that capture and report on quality, progress, equity, and outcome data from cradle to career

Goal 4: Understand and plan to address CTE teacher and faculty shortages

4.1 Understanding the main causes of CTE teacher and faculty shortages across California

- Collect and analyze data on supply of and demand for CTE teacher and faculty across regions in California
- Conduct research with interest holders across the state to identify systemic and regional challenges including, but not limited to, compensation, equivalency, credentialing, professional learning opportunities, and support and mentorship

4.2 Exploring strategies to address shortages

- Conduct a regional, state, and national scan for promising policies and practices that can address CTE teacher and faculty shortages including, but not limited to, compensation, equivalency, credentialing, professional learning opportunities, and support and mentorship
- Develop strategies to deploy in regional contexts across California

4.3 Action planning

- Develop a plan for addressing CTE teacher and faculty shortages across California's diverse regions and contexts

Long-term Areas of Focus

Over the next 10 years, longer term areas of focus will drive efforts toward achieving the vision of this plan. These areas of focus, which are aligned to the four key priorities outlined in the framework for this plan, will build from the progress made on the short-term goals detailed above.

Supply That Meets Demand

1. Create a **public outreach campaign** to promote the value of CTE as a college and career pathway
2. Increase **opportunities** for learners and workers **to demonstrate and develop in-demand, durable, and transferable skills** that meet their lifelong learning needs
3. Create, adapt, and grow **college and career pathway programs** in alignment with in-demand and forecasted skills and skill clusters at the regional, state, and national levels while also considering (K–12) student interest

Effective Delivery and Support

1. Identify and expand effective CTE **recruitment, onboarding, and retention** practices and policies that are differentiated for the wide variety of learner and occupational identities, ages, and experiences in the state
2. Transform **college and career exploration, advising, and navigation** supports for 21st century learners, workers, and careers
3. Ensure all learners receive the **individualized supports** they need to succeed in all educational and career-oriented pursuits to seamlessly transition into the labor market
4. Enhance and expand **professional development opportunities and supports** for CTE teachers and faculty, counselors, guidance advisors, and administrators

Data That Informs Investments

1. Ensure **educational and workforce data** are accessible and useful to educational and workforce actors
2. Use **data-driven decision making** to establish, support and grow college and career pathway programs, informed by multiple data sources and aligned with state priorities
3. Review and revise **accountability systems and supports** to promote continuous improvement and incentivize implementation of high-quality college and career pathway programs

Systems Alignment

1. Develop a **statewide, common framework for equity** in CTE; use data to identify equity gaps; and develop strategies to ensure participation in, and outcomes of, all elements of high-quality CTE, including work-based learning and dual enrollment, are

not predicted by individual characteristics (e.g., race/ethnicity, income, disability status, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, or geographic location).

2. Align state and national education, workforce, and economic development system **priorities and goals** to support quality and equity in college and career pathway programs
3. Strengthen communication, coordination, collaboration, joint decision-making, and learning between regional interest holders to cultivate **systems thinking** and implement a **unified regional approach** for aligning the supply of future workers to meet business and industry demand
4. Develop **funding strategies** to facilitate effective delivery of and support for high-quality college and career pathway programming
5. Fully align **secondary and postsecondary college and career pathways** and create an overall statewide CTE system

Examples from the Field

Inland Empire

Working across sectors and using data and research to drive equitable outcomes for students

The Inland Empire region is home to [Growing Inland Achievement \(GIA\)](#), a K-16 collaborative that is working across sectors to support educational and economic equity in the region by researching issues and opportunities, resourcing innovations and solutions, and connecting diverse stakeholders. GIA uses a collective impact approach supported by data to support equitable outcomes for students in the region. The organization, for example, has published multiple regional data dashboards that profile the college and career readiness, progress, and success of students. These comprehensive data sets are accessible to anyone via the GIA website. GIA has also brought together regional partners to develop an [Equity Continuum](#), a freely accessible formative assessment tool that regional educational institutions can use to help surface and address inequities. The continuum is also meant to help users understand where to source data, what data they should collect (qualitative and quantitative), and how to use data effectively.

GIA is also helping to align secondary and postsecondary systems in the Inland Empire, focused particularly on creating supports around key transition points between high school, college, and the workforce. In the area of earning college credit while in high school, GIA has brought together a cross-sector group to conduct research on the dual enrollment landscape in the region, with a focus on improving communication and advising strategies to ensure students have clear post-secondary education pathways and career goals. Their work in this area has also informed policymaking, encouraging leaders to increase the accessibility and effectiveness of dual enrollment for all students in the region.

Orange County

Building targeted partnerships to create structured dual enrollment and work-based learning opportunities that lead to student success

Orange County's strong regional collaboration structures and alignment between K–12 education, community colleges, and industry are supported by [OC Pathways](#), a collaborative led by the Orange County Department of Education and Orange County Regional Consortium. This consortium is made up of twenty-eight districts, nine community colleges, four ROP's, and multiple community-based organizations and intermediaries. OC Pathways partners work together to create work-based learning opportunities and experiences beyond the classroom while ultimately helping students graduate career-ready in pathways aligned to industry needs. For example, career counselors at both the high school and college levels throughout the district come together monthly to share best practices and problem-solve around reducing barriers and streamlining the student experience across sectors. Additionally, OC Pathways has published [Pathway Grids](#) that highlight academic plans and pathway sequences for a diverse array of key sectors in the region. They provide information on dual enrollment opportunities at local colleges

and universities, as well as clear integration of CTE courses in a 4-, 6-, or 10-year plan for students. The work of the collaborative has led to increases in students' attainment of college credit while in high school, as well as increased completion of industry certifications and internships.

Through partnerships with companies, including training and work-based learning program providers, the consortium gives K–12 students the opportunity to learn about cybersecurity, business, manufacturing, and design while developing core competencies including collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking. Orange County is known for its strong relationships with the medical, tourism, and construction industries and with major tech companies like Amazon, Apple, and Google, and these partnerships have translated into increased work-related opportunities for students. Orange County is also exploring ways to grow partnerships with four-year institutions and community colleges to expand options for students to pursue a bachelor's degree in addition to industry credentials and work experience.

San Joaquin Valley

Aligning systems to create dual enrollment opportunities along pathways aligned to labor market information

The [Fresno-Madera K-16 Collaborative](#) is a regional intersegmental partnership committed to aligning systems in order to support student entry into high-wage careers. The Collaborative aims to increase college certificate and degree attainment in high-demand industries, align educational preparation with the needs of regional employers, and close racial equity gaps by developing an integrated system and seamless set of educational experiences across the region's K–12 districts, five community colleges, and five public and private four-year universities. During the pilot phase of the Collaborative, supported by the Governor's Council on Post-Secondary Education since 2022, partner institutions focused on cultivating shared approaches to fostering student success through pathways in engineering, accounting and fiscal management, single subject teaching, and upskilling teachers for dual enrollment (they are in the process of updating these pathways). To support college and career pathways in engineering across the region, for instance, leaders piloted joint approaches to outreach, tutoring, and career awareness programming. The Collaborative also shares user-friendly information on their website to introduce students and other interested parties to opportunities in the industry. The Collaborative has built strong partnerships with institutions across K-20, in particular with four-year universities, by bringing presidents and superintendents onto their board. Building buy-in at the top has demonstrated to college leaders, faculty, and staff that collaboration is a priority for the school and encouraged them to work towards the goal of clear pathways for student success.

High schools in the region are working with the Collaborative to boost student access to dual enrollment courses aligned to degrees offered by local colleges and universities, with an eye toward providing students a clearly marked route to transition into an associate's program and then a bachelor's program. The Collaborative has focused specifically on foundational dual enrollment, giving students access to general education credits before they enter a specific industry pathway. Using labor market information for pathway design helps to ensure that

students are on a path to careers offering living-wage jobs that need to be filled in the region. This use of data also allows students to understand job earning potential and is implemented hand in hand with a desire to understand family and cultural values in designing strategic pathways for local students. Additionally, the Collaborative is seeking to increase equitable access for all by creating a virtual dual enrollment hub, where students who live in rural counties or areas with a lack of transportation can access college coursework.

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Call to Action

This plan arrives at a point in history where a confluence of factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the acceleration of trends such as automation and virtual learning, are disrupting old models of working and learning and point towards new ways to learn, work, and thrive in California. CTE has a critical role to play in ensuring workers and learners are successful in the labor market and developing the workforce that employers need. New and ongoing challenges and changes provide an opportunity to rethink and redesign CTE systems and structures for a new era. Central to this work is addressing what remains a significant challenge: equity of access and outcomes across California's diverse populations and regions. The future of work and learning in the state must ensure that a Californian's chances of success are not predicted by identity or geography.

Investing in a statewide approach to CTE will generate greater opportunity and stronger outcomes for all Californians, especially those who face multiple barriers to accessing education and quality employment. Greater access to high-quality career readiness education in secondary and postsecondary spaces will provide more students and workers the credentials and skills they need to obtain quality jobs that provide family-sustaining wages. Developing a more coherent, world-class delivery system for CTE is a critical lever for educational and economic development and advancement, shared prosperity, social mobility, resilience, innovation, and a more equitable California.

This plan calls for system leaders, policymakers, and practitioners from across sectors – education, business, workforce development, not-for-profits, government, and the private sector – as well as learners, workers, and their families and communities, to work together to boldly reimagine and restructure CTE. Collaboration will look different across the state's diverse regions. To advance this work, the CDE and the CCCCO will stimulate and support action across California over the next several years, leading the path forward for this work, driving planning and implementation of the strategies outlined in this plan, and providing tools and resources to systems leaders across the state to support implementation.

Appendix A

Guiding Policy Principles to Support Student-Centered K-14+ Pathways

Preamble

The goal of the California Workforce Pathways Joint Advisory Committee (CWPJAC) is to build connected, equitable, accessible, and high-quality K–14+ college and career pathways for all students by: (1) signaling the infrastructure needs, (2) promoting regional and local educational agency efforts for alignment, and (3) reinforcing student supports during critical transitions leading into high school, community college, and beyond.

The *Guiding Policy Principles to Support Student-Centered K–14+ Pathways (Guiding Policy Principles)* are focused on all students and ensuring the best possible opportunities for students. The *Guiding Policy Principles* highlight salient points raised to the CWPJAC members since 2017, build upon existing practices across systems, and focus on key pressure points for supporting cross-system collaboration. They are intentionally designed to be inter-related because individually they are narrow in scope, so it's important to view them as a complementary whole. Students benefit most by having seamless cross-system collaboration. The CWPJAC embraces the principle of continuous improvement, as it applies to its own work, thereby acknowledging that the *Guiding Policy Principles*, *Essential Elements*, *Working Norms*, and *Glossary of Terms* are dynamic and will continue to evolve and adjust over time, as necessary.

Guiding Policy Principles

A priority is to pivot towards purposeful integration of the student experience across systems and into college and career while addressing industry needs by incorporating the following *Guiding Policy Principles* to:

- A. Focus on a **Student-Centered Delivery of Services** for all K–14+ college and career pathways, which accommodates multiple entry points to facilitate students' needs to build their skills as they progress along a continuum of education and training, or advance in a sector-specific occupation or industry.
- B. Promote **Equity and Access** by eliminating institutional barriers and achievement gaps for all students to realize their educational and career aspirations.
- C. Achieve **System Alignment** in the economic regions of the state in order to create a comprehensive and well-defined system of articulation of high quality K–14+ pathway courses (i.e., both in-person and online) and work-based learning opportunities with a specific emphasis on career technical education (CTE). Bring greater coherence to programming, common use of terminology, appropriate data collection and sharing, and attainment of student outcomes in a timely way that lead

to upward mobility in California’s industry sectors. System alignment allows for greater student portability and career advancement.

- D. Support the **Continuous Improvement and Capacity Building** at all levels and components to ensure smooth transitions in the system and focus efforts on implementation of state standards, attainment of student outcomes, and a strengthening of California’s regional economies.
- E. Ensure that **State Priorities and Direction Lead the State Plan** with opportunities in Perkins leveraged to assist in accomplishing the State goals and objectives for student achievement, also known as “the California Way.”

Essential Elements of a High-Quality College and Career Pathway

To realize the *Guiding Policy Principles* outlined above, California recognizes the importance of creating student focused essential elements of a high-quality college and career pathway:

- A. **Student-Centered Delivery of Services** for all K–14+ college and career pathways incorporates the removal of institutional or systemic barriers that impede the progress of students in achieving their education and career goals. This includes a renewed commitment to offer an engaging learning experience and support the diversity of individual student needs while accommodating their multiple entry points as they progress along a continuum of education and training, or advance in a sector-specific occupation or industry.
- B. Student **Equity** goes beyond the reduction of institutional barriers to create an environment of being fair, impartial and free from racism, bias, or favoritism, promote educational and employment attainment, and to eliminate the achievement gap for all students including, but not limited to, English language learners and students with disabilities in the K–14+ college and career pathway system.
- C. **Access** denotes a broader vision of equity ensuring that all students are provided ample opportunities to attain the necessary skills, education and training required to maximize their individual goals including a collective awareness of all the supports that are available to students both inside and out of class. Access also facilitates the elimination of the achievement gap by providing information on how to access programs, services, and rigorous course work for all California students regardless of region, gender, socio-economic status, special needs, and/or English proficiency. Access also includes creating pathways with demonstrable careers for students.
- D. **Leadership at All Levels** is required to achieve greater integration across systems and programs to ensure that the contexts for an engaging learning experience can occur and programs connect, so all students can reach across systems easily and succeed with their desired outcomes including employment, and employers have the workforce needed to thrive.

- E. **High-Quality, Integrated Curriculum and Instruction** informed by labor market information, student interest, technology, industry standards, and real-world engagement through relevant work-based learning opportunities is essential to prepare students. Rigorous and aligned programs should be supported to guide students through relevant course sequences (i.e., both in-person and online) and work-based learning opportunities leading to a mastery of standards, high school graduation, and transition to postsecondary education, training, apprenticeship, and/or employment, as appropriate. Courses and programs may be designed to use cross-system strategies like dual enrollment and/or dual credit with community colleges and universities or other articulations to create a seamless student experience, and avoid unnecessary repeating of courses or other inefficient practices to facilitate “on-time” postsecondary graduation, where appropriate. Stackable badging and credentials can ensure frequency of assessment and a value-added outcome.
- F. **Skilled Instruction and Educational Leadership, informed by Professional Learning**, is the cornerstone of the public education system in California. The educational experience is only as strong as the capacity and investment made in faculty, educational leaders, and the other key field talent to provide in-class, online, or work-based learning opportunities as well as developing an awareness of student support services. California encourages the culture of innovation and entrepreneurialism in program instruction and design that leads to student success.
- G. The strong presence of **Career Exploration and Student Supports** is an essential component for establishing a learning plan for all K–14+ students. This includes identifying appropriate foundational courses (i.e., using competency-based learning) and information about jobs, determining student progression in a single pathway or along multiple pathways or sequences of learning, or making available in-class and online course offerings and work-based learning opportunities. To complement their learning plan, students should also have access to comprehensive counseling, individualized supports along their journey (including, but not limited to, for students who are part-time, face barriers to learning, need academic or cultural supports, transportation, child care, or financial aid), or opportunities through student leadership development organizations to achieve their individual goals and aspirations, through a variety of transitions, in an ever-changing workforce.
- H. **Appropriate Use of Data and Continuous Improvement** should continue to drive CTE through relevant accountability that is outcomes-based, is supported both vertically and horizontally across systems, and ensures equity and access for all students. Continuous improvement ensures students can access the best pathways possible. Focusing on students’ and employers’ needs will allow for identification of capacity building, refinement of programs, and elimination of inefficiencies to meet the existing and emerging needs of regional economies. Through intentional sharing of specific data elements that are actionable across systems will help to showcase student attainment, including mastery of standards, and be informed by industry needs to

achieve relevant system outcomes. Responsible data use is to inform practice and improve programs, not to track students.

- I. Opportunities for strategic and intentional **Cross-System Alignment** should be informed by the ongoing analysis of student data, and alignment of data definitions across systems to provide, for example, deliberate sector-based programs, deployment of technical field assistance using a regional distribution, or evidence-based practices and processes to optimize pathway success and upward mobility opportunities for all participants.
- J. **Intentional Recruitment and Marketing (Promotion, Outreach, and Communication)** should reflect an understanding of students' and employers' needs, be consistent in its messaging to stakeholders across all segments, and use tools and reports as a platform to display the added value of high quality K–14+ college and career pathway programs.
- K. **Sustained Investments and Funding through Mutual Agreements** must be present to encourage regional alliances along with industry sector strategies, especially with a focus on current and/or emerging high-skill, high-wage, and/or high-demand occupations. This includes but is not limited to Kindergarten through grades twelve (K–12) Education, Adult Education, Higher Education, Labor, Economic Development Councils, Chambers of Commerce, Workforce Development Boards, career advisory boards, and regional industry alliances aligned by sector that lead to an industry-recognized credential or certificate, postsecondary training, apprenticeship, and/or employment.
- L. **Strong Partnerships with Industry** and appropriate employers must be developed to inform and improve CTE program design, instruction and work-based learning activities; as well as, ensure that career pathway programs in all grade levels, organizations and apprenticeship programs continue to meet the workforce demands.

Working Norms for Fostering a Mutually-Beneficial Intersegmental Relationship

These working norms are designed to help guide state, regional and local entities in building student-centered, high-quality K–14+ college and career pathways. This collaborative work necessitates:

- A. **Frequent, Open, and Intentional Communication** between Educational Agencies, Workforce Agencies, and Employers.
- B. A **Mindset Shift** from insular to **Coordination of Planning** and from independent to **Interdependent Implementation of Systems** to make better use of and maximize scarce public funds.
- C. A continual scan for opportunities to **Leverage, Build Upon, and/or Replicate Effective Models and Practices** in order to benefit from the scale of the state.

- D. An understanding of the existing eco-system as a basis to **Build a New Culture for our Institutions and Incentivize Behaviors and Relationships.**
- E. **Ongoing Alliances through Sustained Funding and Mutual Agreements** in order to “stay the course” despite governance changes.
- F. A **Commitment** to the work to create **Stability and Sustainability** of the K–14+ college and career pathway system.

Glossary

Access – The institutions’ responsiveness to individual students’ unique social, economic, and cultural conditions to ensure all students have equal opportunities to take full advantage of their education, including a collective awareness of all the supports both inside and out of class that are available to them.

All Students – The State of California recognizes its deep responsibility to ensure that each and every student receives a world class 21st century education, one that supports the achievement of their highest potential. In order to accomplish this goal, it is important to continuously strive for equity in all classrooms, schools and districts by considering students’ cultural, ethnic, and linguistic background; disability; sexual orientation; economic status; and other factors.

Attainment Gap – Some students have limited access to well-prepared teachers/faculty and other educational resources. Recognizing the specific inequities that exist helps educators and communities to purposefully and strategically take action to strive for true educational equity for all learners.

Career Pathway – A coordinated, non-duplicative sequence of academic and technical content, including employability skills, at the secondary and postsecondary level that aligns with the needs of industry, and has multiple entry and exit points that culminates in the attainment of a postsecondary credential and/or employment.

Equality – This is the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, and educational and training opportunities or proportionality to reflect the communities being served.

Equity – To systemically create an environment of being fair and impartial, and be free from bias or favoritism to promote educational and employment attainment among all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities.

Methods of Learning – Different modes of learning may include, but is not limited to, in-person or online instruction, apprenticeship, internship, and other work-based learning opportunities; however, instruction is provided, it must adjust to distinct learning needs and cultural backgrounds of students in order to lead to a certificate, credential, or degree.

Socioeconomically Disadvantaged – For K–12, this includes students eligible for the free and reduced priced meal program, foster youth, homeless students, migrant students, and students for whom neither parent is a high school graduate. For community colleges, this definition also includes veterans, Pell and Promise Grant qualified, and/or first generation students.

Student-Centered – A restructuring of policies so that the provision of education and training programs, engaging learning experiences, instructional approaches, and academic support strategies at our institutions address the distinct learning needs, interests, and aspirations while also honoring cultural backgrounds of individual students or groups of students who may have a variety of needs (including homelessness or food insecurity; need academic, cultural, and/or linguistic supports; transportation; or child care or financial aid). For community colleges, the movement to implement Guided Pathways embodies a student-centered restructuring of the student experience.

System Alignment – Bringing greater coherence and efficiency to curriculum, programs, initiatives, and education and training system that includes K–12, community college, and the public workforce system and beyond, with a particular focus on workforce pathways that consider regional labor market needs.

Workforce – People who are engaged in or are available to work, within a geographic location, or a particular company or industry.

Appendix B

Summary of Previous California Workforce Pathways Joint Advisory Committee Discussion(s) and Action(s)

November 19, 2021: JFF presented the second of two study sessions as part of the development process for the California State Plan for CTE. The session helped participants explore bold and visionary ideas and drivers of transformation and change for an equitable future of work and CTE. Participants heard from national leaders about the current and future demand for skills and jobs, and how the lines between K-12 education, postsecondary education, and the labor market must be blurred to better meet the needs of those in the workforce, those seeking to enter the workforce, and employers who are seeking talent, connecting the dots to help prepare for success in the world of work. Speakers shared research, insights, and forward-looking innovations for consideration and potential adaptation to the California context as the state develops and implements the State Plan for CTE to increase economic mobility. The study session was designed to be interactive and engaging, and speakers were again invited to challenge and inspire CWPJAC members and to inform the Committee's thinking.

September 29, 2021: JFF presented the development process for the California State Plan for CTE. This was the first of two study sessions to help participants explore what has changed, what is working, and what lies ahead as education and workforce systems evolve with the changing world of work and to be responsive to the needs of employers and students' career goals. Participants learned about issues and trends shaping the future of work and skills nationally and in California, incorporating what has changed since the State Plan development process first began and including lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants heard from states and leaders at the forefront of systems change and alignment, who shared how they have driven innovation in high-quality CTE and bolstered regional partnerships to support local design and implementation. Participants also learned about the role that high-quality work-based learning plays in equitable CTE programs and systems. Speakers from inside and outside of California shared lessons learned, insights, and ideas for participants to consider and potentially adapt to the California context as the state develops and implements the State Plan for CTE. The study session was designed to be interactive and engaging, and speakers were invited to challenge and inspire CWPJAC members and to inform the Committee's thinking.

August 6, 2021: JFF presented the Project Overview (review of the project timeline, including key milestones and decision points for the CWPJAC), Focus Groups (review the proposed structure and list of interest holder groups to be included in the focus groups to solicit interest holder feedback for the State Plan for CTE), and the Study Sessions (provide an overview of the proposed topics for the study sessions for CWPJAC members to be held at the September and November 2021 meetings).

May 14, 2021: The CAST presented a revised project outline and timeline for the scope of work to be undertaken based on feedback received from the CWPJAC members at the January 2021 meeting.

January 29, 2021: The CAST presented an outline and projected timeline for the scope of work to be undertaken, that included an implementation phase through 2023 to facilitate the adoption of the State Plan by the field once the State Plan has been finalized and approved by the CWPJAC.

September 25, 2020: The CAST presented a framework for organization the approach and development of the State Plan/Call to Action into four key areas that encompasses the broad work under development.

July 10, 2020: The CAST presented a Strategic Plan/Call to Action approach to completing the California State Plan for CTE as a set of inter-related steps that require reviewing public and non-public documentation, as well as interaction with a wide swathe of interest holders.

November 25, 2019: The CWPJAC discussed the development of a comprehensive California State Plan for CTE, along with an extended timeline beyond the Federal Perkins V State Plan submission to the U.S. Department of Education (ED). The CWPJAC advised staff to continue work on developing the comprehensive California State Plan for CTE.

October 11, 2019: The CWPJAC reviewed, discussed, and provided initial input to a preliminary draft of the California State Plan for CTE. The CWPJAC directed staff to focus on the Federal Perkins V State Plan and present a draft federal application to the CWPJAC at its November 2019 meeting. The CWPJAC also reviewed and discussed an updated draft timeline of completed and future meetings for completing the Federal Perkins V State Plan.

September 13, 2019: The CWPJAC reviewed a preliminary draft of the revisions to California's State Plan for CTE, as well as an updated draft timeline.

July 12, 2019: The SBE, CCCCO, and CDE staff together updated the draft timeline and planned activities for completing the revisions to California's State Plan for CTE.

May 29, 2019: The SBE, CCCCO, and CDE staff together introduced a draft timeline and planned activities for revising California's State Plan for CTE.

March 12, 2008: On March 12, 2008, the SBE unanimously approved the *2008–2012 California State Plan for Career Technical Education*, as required by the Perkins IV, which had been previously approved by the Board of Governors on March 3, 2008. The Perkins IV State Plan was subsequently approved by the ED on July 1, 2008.

Appendix C

California State Plan for CTE Framework: With Equity and Access at the Foundation

		KEY PRIORITIES			
		Supply that Meets the Demand	Effective Delivery and Support	Data that Informs the Investments	Systems Alignment
CROSS-CUTTING THEMES	Career Pathways	X	X	X	X
	CTE Teacher and Faculty Prep and Pipeline	X	X	X	X
	Dual Enrollment	X	X	X	X
	Regional Partnership Development	X	X	X	X
	Work-based Learning	X	X	X	X

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